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ABSTRACT

This book documents the debate among the Inuit of Nunavik (northern Quebec) over the purposes, strengths, and weaknesses of public schools in their 14 arctic communities. The book begins with a summary of the history of education in Nunavik, including traditional Inuit methods and purposes of education. The 14 communities comprise the Kativik School Board (KSB), the first Inuit-controlled school district in Canada, which was created as part of the 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) among Inuit and Cree communities and provincial and federal governments. In its first decade, KSB built new schools in all communities, designed and began a teacher education program for Inuit instructing primary grades in their own language, and developed Inuttitut curriculum materials for all grade levels. In 1989, an independent task force was established to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the education system in Nunavik. Rather than fine-tuning the existing system, the task force defined an entirely new system encompassing all regional organizations, not just the school board. The balance of the book focuses on the task force enquiry, community and school board responses, and the process of implementing task force recommendations in consultation with community members. A final chapter discusses aspects of indigenous education that might be drawn upon to strengthen Western schooling. Extensive appendices contain the education provisions of the JBNQA, task force recommendations and KSB responses, descriptions of the 14 communities, and other background documents. (Contains 51 references, an index, maps, and many photographs.) (SV)

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